

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In interactive television, a broadcaster may broadcast triggers to a great many receiver units prompting the receiver units to attempt to send requests to a single destination on the Internet at roughly the same time. Such a large number of simultaneous requests can give rise to throughput problems and server overload. A receiver unit in accordance with the invention, rather than immediately attempting to send a request, waits a period of time (for example, a random period) before sending the request so as not to overload the server. In one embodiment, a trigger is received on an interactive television receiver unit prompting the viewer to select an icon. If the viewer selects the icon, then a browser in the receiver unit retrieves a web page on the Internet identified by a URL in the trigger. The web page includes an indication of a destination, scheduling information, and a form area. The viewer enters user information in association with the form area. The browser captures that user information, incorporates it into a request, and then stores the request in a queue along with the scheduling information. The browser periodically checks the scheduling information in the queue and determines from the scheduling information if it is time to send the request. When the browser determines the time has come to send a request in the queue, the browser retrieves the request and sends it to the destination. The browser may then receive a return response and display it.

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